

CLAIMS

1-25 (Previously cancelled)

26. (Cancelled)

27-28 (Previously cancelled)

29. (Twice amended) An energy absorbing system comprising:

an energy absorber mechanically coupled to a net;

a joint mechanically coupled to the energy absorber;

a sleeve rotatably mechanically coupled to an anchor and mechanically coupled to the joint; and

a support mechanically coupled to the net via a frangible connector,

wherein the frangible connector uncouples the support from the net upon application of at least a threshold force to the frangible connector, and wherein the joint pivots on a horizontal axis and supports the energy absorber at a predetermined angle relative to ground level.

30. (Cancelled)

31-66 (Previously cancelled)

67. (Cancelled)

68-69 (Previously cancelled)

70. (Twice amended) A method for absorbing the energy of an errant vehicle, comprising:

positioning a net across an area through which the vehicle is expected to pass, the net being mechanically coupled to an energy absorber, which is mechanically coupled to a joint, which is mechanically coupled to a sleeve, which is rotatably mechanically coupled to an anchor; and

mechanically coupling the net to a support through a frangible connector,

wherein the frangible connector uncouples the support from the net upon application of at least a threshold force to the frangible connector by the vehicle and the force of the vehicle is transferred through the net to the anchor, and

wherein the joint pivots on a horizontal axis and supports the energy absorber at a predetermined angle relative to ground level.

71. (Cancelled)

72. (Amended) A method for absorbing the energy of an errant vehicle, comprising:

positioning a net across an area through which the vehicle is expected to pass, the net being mechanically coupled to an anchor;

mechanically coupling an upper portion of the net to a support through [a] an upper frangible connector and mechanically coupling a lower portion of the net to the support through a lower frangible connector;

tensioning the upper and lower frangible connectors [and
changing the height of a support, thereby changing the height of the net],
wherein the upper and lower frangible [connector uncouples] connectors uncouple the
support from the net upon application of at least a threshold force to the upper and lower
frangible [connector] connectors by the vehicle,
wherein the force of the vehicle is transferred through the net to the anchor,
wherein a sleeve rotatably mechanically couples the anchor and a joint, and
wherein an energy absorber mechanically couples the net and the joint.

73. (Previously cancelled)

74. (Twice amended) An energy absorbing system comprising:

means for absorbing energy;
means for restraining a vehicle, the restraining means being connected to the energy
absorbing means to enable the transfer of energy from [a] the vehicle impacting the
restraining means to the energy absorbing means;
means for permitting the restraining means to rotate about the energy absorbing means;
means for pivoting the restraining means on a horizontal axis;
means for tensioning upper and lower portions of the means for restraining a vehicle;
and
means for supporting the restraining means in a position likely to be impacted by [an
errant] the vehicle until the application of at least a threshold force by the vehicle to the
restraining means.

75. (Twice amended) An energy absorbing system comprising:

means for absorbing energy;

means for restraining a vehicle, the restraining means being connected to the energy absorbing means to enable the transfer of energy from a vehicle impacting the restraining means to the energy absorbing means;

means for permitting the restraining means to rotate about the energy absorbing means;

means for pivoting the restraining means on a horizontal axis and supporting the energy absorbing means at a predetermined angle relative to ground level; and

means for supporting the restraining means in a position likely to be impacted by [an errant] the vehicle until the application of at least a threshold force by the vehicle to the restraining means.

76-81 (Previously cancelled)

82. (Cancelled)

83-90 (Previously cancelled)

91. (Twice amended) An energy absorbing system comprising:

a first anchor to which a first sleeve is rotatably mechanically coupled;

a first joint mechanically coupling the first sleeve and a first energy absorber, allowing the first energy absorber to pivot on a horizontal axis from a predetermined angle relative to ground level;

a net mechanically coupled to the first energy absorber at one end and a second energy absorber at another end;

a second joint mechanically coupling a second sleeve and the second energy absorber, allowing the second energy absorber to pivot on a horizontal axis from a predetermined angle relative to ground level;

[a first energy absorber mechanically coupling the first sleeve and a net;]

a second anchor to which [a] the second sleeve is rotatably mechanically coupled;

[a second energy absorber mechanically coupling the second sleeve and the net;] and

first and second supports, each mechanically coupled to the net via frangible connectors,

wherein the first anchor and the first support are arranged such that at least a portion of the net between the first anchor and the first support is substantially parallel to a likely direction of a vehicle to be stopped by the energy absorbing system,

[wherein the first and second energy absorbers are arranged in a direction not substantially perpendicular to a likely direction of a vehicle to be stopped by the energy absorbing system, and]

wherein the frangible connectors uncouple the first and second supports from the net and the first and second [sleeve rotates] sleeves rotate about an axis of the first [anchor] and second anchors, respectively, when a force is applied to the net.

92. (Previously cancelled)

93. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 29, wherein the predetermined angle is substantially parallel to ground level.

94. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 29, wherein the joint includes a stop plate preventing the joint from pivoting beyond the predetermined angle.

95. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 29, wherein the sleeve is substantially vertically fixed relative to the anchor.

96. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 29, further comprising a tensioning device mechanically coupling the frangible connector and one of the net and the support.

97. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 96, wherein the frangible connector and tensioning device are combined into a single device.

98. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 29, further comprising:

a second energy absorber mechanically coupled to a lower portion of the net and arranged below the energy absorber; and

a second joint mechanically coupled to the second energy absorber and mechanically coupled to the sleeve,

wherein the second joint pivots on a horizontal axis and supports the second energy absorber at a predetermined angle relative to ground level.

99. (New) The method of claim 70, wherein when the force of the vehicle is transferred to the anchor, the joint pivots on a horizontal axis from the predetermined angle to a second angle.

100. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 91, further comprising a tensioning device mechanically coupling the frangible connector and one of the net and the support.

101. (New) An energy absorbing system comprising:

an energy absorber mechanically coupling a net and an anchor;

a support mechanically coupled to an upper portion of the net via an upper frangible connector and an upper tensioning device, the support mechanically coupled to a lower portion of the net via a lower frangible connector and a lower tensioning device;

wherein the upper and lower frangible connectors uncouple the support from the net upon application of at least a threshold force to the upper and lower frangible connectors, and wherein the upper and lower tensioning devices cause upper and lower portions of the net to be substantially taut.

102. (New) The energy absorbing system of claim 101, wherein at least one of the frangible connectors and at least one of the tensioning devices are combined into a single device.

103. (New) An energy absorbing system comprising:

an energy absorber mechanically coupled to a net;

a joint mechanically coupled to the energy absorber;

a sleeve rotatably mechanically coupled to an anchor and mechanically coupled to the joint; and

a support having a base mechanically coupled to a post mechanically coupled to the net, wherein the post uncouples from the base upon application of at least a threshold force to the net, and wherein the joint supports the energy absorber at a predetermined angle relative to ground level.